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SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF
GENERAL JOHN W. VESSEY, JR., USA
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
ON
FY 1986 DOD AUTHORIZATION
BEFORE THE
SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE
7 FEBRUARY 1985**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee.

I report to you that the military posture of our Armed Forces is sound. The forces are manned with good, capable people; their armament is being improved with good, modern equipment; their training has been improved; and they have better support behind them. By every common sense measure, our forces are more ready than at any time in the recent past. These improvements are due to the support of the American people and the Congress; and, on behalf of the men and women in our Armed Forces, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and I thank you for your support. We ask for your continued assistance in the FY 1986 budget.

Good people are the heart of our forces, and I am pleased that the favorable trends reported last year generally continue. Recruitment and retention are good. About 50 percent of the force are careerists. We have a fine corps of non-commissioned officers. By every standard, we have well-disciplined, dedicated, capable Service men and women who are proudly serving their country. We need to continue to support the programs which will ensure our Armed Forces are manned by intelligent, trained, well-disciplined soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines.

Our forces are better equipped. New, good equipment from long-delayed modernization has made its way into the hands of our

forces -- active, reserve and National Guard. In FY 1984 alone, the equipment added to the force included the following important items:

- 769 M-1 Tanks
- 598 BRADLEY Fighting Vehicles
- 120 BLACKHAWK Helicopters
- 209 PATRIOT Missiles
- 72 Multiple Launch Rocket Systems
- 11 APACHE Attack Helicopters
- 187 New F-15, F-16 and A-10 Fighters
- 46 Ships (including 16 warships) and 282 Aircraft for the Navy
- Plus thousands of trucks, small arms, and communications items.

We have added not just quantity to our force but, more importantly, greatly increased capability. A few examples:

-- M-1 ABRAMS Tank - Average tank gunnery qualification scores 46 percent higher than those of M-60A3 crews. Last year, a US tank company in M-1's scored the highest in the prestigious Canadian Army Trophy competition against the best tank crews and tanks in the Free World.

-- M-2 BRADLEY Fighting Vehicle - High-speed battlefield companion to the M-1. More armor protection for the crew; TOW

missile and cannon firepower; and greatly increased mobility in comparison to the M-113 Armored Personnel Carrier (APC).

-- Helicopters - BLACKHAWK and APACHE - Two of the best in the world. Improved lift, range, and sustainability. APACHE - vastly improved firepower and protection, and can navigate and attack at night.

-- F-16 Fighter - The best single-engine fighter in the world. Maneuverable, agile, maintainable (needs only 1/2 maintenance-man hours of the fighter it replaced). Phenomenal bombing accuracies; does as well with conventional bombs as F-4 did with guided bombs.

-- M-16A2 Rifle - Lightweight, dependable, versatile. Improved accuracy, improved sustained firing capability for the infantryman.

-- AEGIS on the TICONDEROGA Class cruiser - Provides up to nine-fold increase in air defense firepower for the protection of the Fleet.

-- SL-7 Roll-on/Roll-off (RO/RO) Fast Sealift - USNS ALGOL during September 1984. REFORGER exercise moved 271 tracked vehicles, 652 wheels, 230 military containers -- loaded in only 36 hours, and capable of traveling from Beaumont, TX, to Antwerp, Belgium, in six days instead of 13.

Our forces are well trained and they know how to fight together in ways which capitalize on the advantages the new equipment can offer. We are emphasizing joint and combined

exercises. The training is realistic and innovative. The forces are trained and measured against high standards.

Support and sustainability programs are on-hand as new equipment is fielded to ensure that our forces can prevail in sustained combat. In the past three years, the funding for ammunition and spare parts has grown by over 25 percent; spare parts funding has doubled; and in Europe alone, Army ammunition on the ground is up about 16 percent.

All these factors -- good people, good equipment, good training and support -- add to our strength. The Joint Chiefs of Staff believe that this improved military posture serves as an incentive for Soviet restraint and will provide a climate for sensible negotiations. A strong national defense helps ensure the peace and safeguard our freedom.

Your support is important for the continued security of the Nation and that of our allies. Regrettably, our security and that of the West are not assured. Even under the best of circumstances, the second half of the decade of the 1980's will continue as a period of challenges to our security and as a period of widespread instability. The Soviet Union has been unrelenting in its buildup of military power and in its willingness to use or to threaten to use that power either directly or through the use of its surrogates.

As the Congress considers the defense budget, I urge the members to remember the need for day-to-day readiness. Crises too often give little warning of their approach. The lessons learned since World War II show us that no matter how good the preparations, orderly mobilization is very difficult and very costly once growing tensions indicate immediate danger. Under modern conditions, hasty improvisation of battle-ready forces is not practical even if the national treasure is spent without restraint. An Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps -- in-being and maintained in readiness -- are the best military guarantors of our security; and they add weight to our diplomacy and support the other elements of our national power.

Every indication the Joint Chiefs of Staff see tells us the Soviets will most likely continue on the path they have been on, fielding stronger nuclear and conventional forces on the land, on and under the sea, in the air, and in space. The United States has no plans to match the Soviet buildup weapon for weapon. Certainly, the Joint Chiefs do not believe this should be done or need be done. However, this Nation and its allies simply must do what's needed to counter the Soviets with a military posture which makes clear that the Soviets cannot achieve their aims by starting a war or threatening war.

The Joint Chiefs believe that our strategy provides this Nation with a sensible approach to preserve the peace and to provide for our national security. It is not a new strategy. It is the strategy of deterrence which we have pursued for nearly forty years. The success of that strategy rests on ready, modern active and reserve component forces and on the maintenance of strong alliances.

THREAT

While being pleased with the improvements in our own forces, we must remember that the Soviets have not been standing still. The momentum of the Soviet military buildup, unequalled by any peacetime nation in history, will carry Soviet force expansion and modernization programs well into the 1990's. With this pace of modernization over the last ten years, the Soviets have produced about three times as many aircraft and about four times as many tanks and other tracked vehicles as the United States. They have deployed a large and powerful navy. The Soviets have the world's only operational antisatellite weapon.

Soviet forces have always enjoyed significant quantitative advantages. To counter this, the United States has traditionally relied on the qualitative advantages afforded by its technology.

The Soviets, however, are beginning to field new equipment, much of it comparable to that produced in the West, and our qualitative edge is slipping. The Soviets have achieved this through a willingness to devote large resources to research and development, through adaptation and outright piracy of Western technology, and through their willingness to accept inefficiency in order to field new equipment rapidly. They devote twice the resources to research and development as the United States and they produce five times as many scientists and engineers -- over 400,000 annually. In the past ten years, the Soviets have produced some 40 major aircraft developments, 60 major shipbuilding developments, 50 ballistic missile and space system developments, and 45 in ground forces. They develop new jet engines and several new rockets every year and they are presently testing two new attack helicopters.

With the momentum of investments in their military forces over the past decade and with sustained levels of effort in research and development, net Soviet combat power in every theater has increased. In the ground forces in the European Theater, for example, the Soviet Union along with the other countries in the Warsaw Pact has continued to increase its strength in armor, anti-armor and heavy fire support. The Soviet air forces are now flying third generation attack and fighter aircraft throughout the Warsaw Pact. They have deployed the

MIG-29 FULCRUM with look-down/shoot-down weapons systems and are expected to deploy the SU-27 FLANKER with similar capabilities. The Soviet Navy has by far the world's largest submarine fleet with 370 ships. There are 320 BACKFIRES, over 100 of which are dedicated to naval aviation and global anti-ship missions. Their surface combatants are among the most modern in the world, and they are now building a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier we believe will be large enough to operate high-performance jet aircraft.

Most ominously, the Soviets continue to modernize their strategic nuclear forces. In 1982, the Soviets deployed more, highly accurate intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) warheads than we intend to deploy in all of our PEACEKEEPER program. In 1983, they deployed another 200 ICBM warheads and in 1984 they were nearing completion of the latest phase of the modernization of their current silo-based strategic ICBMs. The Soviets' SS-18 and SS-19 missiles, which would total over 5,000 warheads, are in the world's hardest silos, with a redundant, survivable, command and control network. Moscow is protected by the world's only operational ballistic missile defense system. We expect deployment of newer missiles, the SS-X-24 and SS-X-25. We have yet to deploy a single PEACEKEEPER missile.

Soviet power is a reality that cannot be assumed away. With a population exceeding ours by only 17 percent, they have active

armed forces two and a half times larger and ready reserves exceeding ours by about a factor of ten. We must continue to face up to the realities of Soviet military power this year and in the coming years with a sustained program that demonstrates the steadiness of our resolve to defend our interests.

WHAT THIS BUDGET PROVIDES

The Joint Chiefs believe that the budget for FY 86 supports the Nation's strategy. We participated in the formulation of this budget, and we are satisfied that the proper balance has been struck at the resource levels which have been set. This budget provides resources to continue the improvements in our Armed Forces, and it will help assure the effectiveness of our deterrent posture in the years ahead. The budget will provide the readiness today's forces need to deter war. The budget continues the modernization of the equipment for our forces. It provides for a modest growth in the size of the forces. The budget provides steady improvements in sustainability. Today's readiness needs are balanced with the need for modern forces in the future. There is sensible balance in the resources provided for nuclear and conventional forces. The budget provides substantial growth in research and development activities to help maintain a qualitative advantage for US forces in the years ahead.

STRATEGIC NUCLEAR FORCES

Our TRIAD of strategic nuclear forces is the umbrella under which all our deterrent forces operate. The TRIAD is designed as a deterrent, not for a first strike. About 80 percent of our strategic weapons are in the bomber and submarine forces and only 20 percent in ICBMs. We maintain the three elements of our TRIAD because we believe each leg of the TRIAD provides special strengths which reinforce the deterrent value of the other legs and which help guard against tactical and technical surprise. The TRIAD has been the basis of our deterrent posture for over two decades.

The United States delayed its strategic nuclear modernization, and we have had to modernize all three legs of the TRIAD at the same time. We are making steady progress with the bomber and submarine force modernization. The TRIDENT submarine program will modernize our aging ballistic missile submarine fleet and the D-5 missile will add new capabilities to the force at the end of this decade. The B-1B program is on schedule; it will be in the operational force next year. It will provide a modern, responsive bomber capable of penetrating Soviet defenses.

The modernization of the intercontinental ballistic missile force has had a series of delays well known to this committee. The delays have not been technological or system delays; the

missile is performing superbly. The Joint Chiefs of Staff urge the immediate deployment of the PEACEKEEPER. Its deployment will strengthen the TRIAD, help ensure deterrence, and strengthen the position of our nuclear arms negotiators. The PEACEKEEPER is tested and proven, and it is ready for deployment. The Joint Chiefs of Staff fully agree with the conclusions of the bipartisan President's Commission on Strategic Forces that we must proceed now with the deployment of the PEACEKEEPER in order to maintain the effectiveness of the TRIAD and our deterrent strategy into the next century.

Research and development on the small ICBM is proceeding. It will add the new dimension of mobility to the ICBM forces in the mid-1990's.

STRATEGIC DEFENSE INITIATIVE

The Joint Chiefs support the President's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) to have this Nation employ its technological talent to determine whether an alternative to sole reliance on offensive retaliation is feasible. Within the bounds of the ABM Treaty, the United States is exploring means which provide the hope that we can end the dominance of offensive ballistic missile weaponry.

CHEMICAL

The Soviets have extensive offensive and defensive chemical warfare capabilities. Our lack of a modern, chemical retaliatory capability detracts from our overall deterrent posture. Should deterrence fail, our forces would be fighting at great disadvantage in spite of the strides we have made in improving defenses against chemical weapons. Unless we modernize our chemical munitions and continue to provide for a sensible research and development program to prevent technical surprise, we provide little incentive to the Soviets for negotiating a verifiable arms control agreement prohibiting chemical weapons. This budget provides for long leadtime items and facilities in order to begin production of binary chemical weapons, weapons which are safer to store and to employ and which help reduce the likelihood of the use of chemical weapons in the first place.

NEGOTIATIONS

The Joint Chiefs fully support efforts to obtain genuine, equitable and verifiable reductions in armaments. Arms control and other related negotiations are being pursued with the idea that equitable and verifiable agreements can contribute to security and stability. Negotiations are not a substitute for force modernization; rather, negotiations and our modernization

programs are mutually reinforcing. We must modernize our own systems even while we seek genuine reductions in force levels through negotiations.

PEOPLE

No matter how good the strategy or excellent the equipment, good soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines remain the heart of our defense forces. This Nation has very good people in its Armed Forces today because of the Nation's renewed pride and faith in those people and the willingness to pay the price for adequate security. The men and women in uniform need to know we will give them the best possible equipment, training and support for their difficult tasks; and they need to know this Nation will provide reasonable pay and compensation for them and adequate support for their families. As we continue into a period of economic recovery and as we face a declining manpower pool, we must guard against the erosion of pay, retirement, and other benefits. We surely do not want to return the forces to the unstable personnel picture of the mid-1970's. The budget provides the right sort of support.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I want to repeat what I said before this Committee a year ago: that this Nation and its allies must

remain strong and steady. Last year I reported to you that we were making progress in reversing the decline of the 1970's in our general purpose forces and that we were in the early stages of modernizing our strategic nuclear deterrent forces. That progress continues. It is important that we sustain that progress in order to maintain the effectiveness of our deterrent strategy.

When the Joint Chiefs look at the Soviets' forces, we see forces that are very large and capable of offensive operations on a global scale. We see their willingness to use their forces and those of their surrogates in Asia, Europe, Africa and in this hemisphere to achieve their aims. Our forces are designed for deterrence. That has been our strategy since World War II, and it's been a sensible strategy.

The Joint Chiefs have examined the strategy and the threat, and we believe that this budget will continue to improve our forces by providing good people, good equipment, good training, and good support. As I said at the beginning, we need not match the Soviets weapon for weapon or man for man; but, this Nation absolutely must continue to deal with the unrelenting growth of Soviet power and with the realities of an increasingly inter-dependent and dangerous world. I urge your support for the President's defense budget.